

## *Vesta Kirby: An Artist - An Educator (1936-2016)*

It is with a heavy heart that I announce the passing of Vesta Kirby, Friends of the Sharon Art Studio (FOSAS) Fine Arts Educator at the Sharon Art Studio. Vesta passed away Monday, November 14, 2016. Vesta may have been 80, but was timeless in all aspects. She began teaching at the Sharon Art Studio in the early 1990's. She created through many eras, many seasons, and through all of them was always dignified and earnest. She poised herself with care and self-assurance, just as she did her beloved brushes and pastels.

At an age when most people would contemplate slowing down, Vesta continued to ramp up her activity, joining the FOSAS Board in 2014 and continuing to serve her students as a contractual instructor with a full course load for our upcoming winter session. She will be missed. As her sister communicated to me today, "Although she had no children she was the 'Auntie Mame' of our family and hosted cultural experiences for each of her 3 nieces and 3 nephews as they approached their teens and even continued with her grand-nieces." I worked with her the past few weeks finalizing her winter schedule and she expressed to me how the studio, "...is a place I adore and my students continue to give me so much. I'm very grateful and elated when I work with them. It is wonderful what they bring to this place."

Vesta really espoused what a community art center is; she believed in the Sharon Building not as a personal studio but as the special treasure that is about many first, not "me" now. The opportunity to create in concert with others was something she enjoyed.



She was generous in time and tone. She would be one of the first to raise a hand to volunteer at a fundraiser and open her arms to share a hug with someone in need. She would leave notes at holidays for colleagues or cards when tragedy or loss met people in her path. She was inquisitive and carried a large palette of interests as an artist.

While her pace may have shifted gears in recent months her focus never lost steam; she was creative and concerned to the end: excited and appreciative to be a part of our community of art-making. In a week where we experienced the super moon, how beautiful there was never a twilight for Vesta.

**Matthew R. Burns**  
FOSAS Executive Director